

FA Cup replay special

LAST GASP FOR BORO



FOILED! Wycombe goalkeeper John Maskell dives to stop an effort from Middlesbrough's Mick Mills in the FA Cup replay at Ayresome Park last night.

Middlesbrough 1, Wycombe Wanderers 0

A LAST-GASP goal from Middlesbrough's Under-23 international David Armstrong last night saved the First Division side's blushes and put them through to a glamour derby tie with Sunderland in the next round.

The seconds were ticking away when Armstrong collected a superb through ball from Graeme Souness to prod the ball past advancing goalkeeper John Maskell, to the delight and relief of a 30,000 crowd.

But the real heroes were the valiant non-leaguers from Wycombe, who had come so close to providing yet another upset.

They were given a standing ovation as they waved to the crowd at the end of an epic struggle dominated by Middlesbrough — but in which the part-timers grew in stature all the way through.

Plucky

Middlesbrough manager Jackie Charlton had forecast murder for the non-leaguers after being embarrassed into this replay.

But somebody forgot to tell Wycombe during a fiercely-contested first-half in which the plucky part-timers refused to give an inch.

The pattern of the game was established inside the first 90 seconds when Under-23 striker David Mills broke through strongly on the left only to fire past the upright.

But Wycombe invariably had a man behind the ball to unsettle the home side whenever they broke clear.

And they had enough in reserve to test goalkeeper Jim Platt with three dangerous efforts.

Howard Kennedy proved the danger man with two long shots that brought Platt full-stretch and then Steve Perrin almost sneaked what would have been a sensational goal at the near post after 28 minutes.

By right, the brave part-timers should have been dead and buried by

By COLIN DIBALL

the interval as first David Armstrong blasted a chance wide and then Graeme Souness put two fierce drives past.

But their most expensive let-off came on the half-hour. John Hickton forced the ball across the box for the umpteenth time and Alan Foggon, just three yards out, somehow put the ball well over the bar.

One Hickton shot in the 50th minute was well saved again by Maskell, but there were times when Boro were becoming unnerved by their inability to crack what should have been inferior opposition.

Vital

In the 60th minute Foggon was replaced by Alan Willey and moments later the vital breakthrough seemed certain when Armstrong shot right into the path of Mills. But the eager striker failed to get a touch.

After 68 minutes Willey headed a Mills cross on to the bar.

Boro threw everything into a last desperate 10 minutes. Mills shot the best chance of the night straight at hero Maskell and then Willey was desperately unlucky for the second time with a shot that flicked the post.

But with extra time looking certain, Armstrong came to Boro's rescue.